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ABSTRACT

Cooperation among institutions, ways of facilitating exchanges of specialists and experience, and the joint development of learning resources were examined in a meeting of leaders from 31 regional training institutions from all world regions. Part of UNESCO's long-term concern with the training of media professionals, the meeting opened with a presentation by Antonio Pasquali, Deputy Assistant Director-General for the Communication Sector, who discussed UNESCO's professional training programs. Reports presented by participants in plenary sessions focused on specific regional training problems and needs, with emphasis on the trainer and training methods, curricula, training materials, new techniques, and the need for greater regional and interregional cooperation. Participants then separated into two working groups to formulate recommendations concerning cooperation with international and regional communication training organizations, staff development, curricula, textbooks, and training materials, specialist needs, women in the media, research and evaluation, and clearinghouses and miscellaneous needs. The 36 consolidated recommendations which resulted were adopted by the meeting at its final plenary session. An annex lists participants, observers, organizations of the United Nations System, and the UNESCO Secretariat. (LMM)

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UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL,
SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION

MEETING OF EXPERTS ON CO-OPERATION AMONG REGIONAL COMMUNICATION TRAINING INSTITUTIONS

Unesco, Paris, 19-22 April 1983

FINAL REPORT

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INTRODUCTION

The Meeting of Experts on Co-operation among Regional Communication Training Institutions was held at Unesco Headquarters from 19 to 22 April 1983.

The meeting selected the following officers:

Chairman	:	Mr N.V.K. Murthy (India)
Vice-Chairman	:	Mr Babacar Sine (Senegal)
Rapporteur	:	Mr Donald G.H. Rowlands (United Kingdom)

The meeting was part of Unesco's long-term concern with the training of professionals for the media. However, it was the first time that the training of professional media specialists was examined on a global scale. Previous Unesco meetings have been primarily regional or subregional in scope or have concentrated on specific aspects of communication.

The purpose of the meeting was to examine the possibilities of co-operation among institutions and to study ways of facilitating exchanges of specialists and experience as well as the joint development of learning resources. The participants were invited by the Director-General in their personal capacity and not as representatives of their governments. They were selected among heads of thirty-one regional training institutions from all regions of the world. Observers from fourteen non-governmental organizations and professional associations and three representatives from Specialized Agencies of the United Nations also attended the meeting.

The meeting was opened by the representative of the Director-General of Unesco, Mr Antonio Pasquali, Deputy Assistant Director-General for the Communication Sector. Mr Pasquali drew attention to the fact that this meeting was the first time that training in all the communication media was being discussed internationally, the participants representing not only all areas of the world but all the disciplines taught in communication training institutions and at all levels. Speaking of Unesco's programmes for professional training which have evolved throughout the years to meet the needs of Member States, he hoped that the solving of common problems would enable the different training centres to perfect methods and strategies for their future. Referring to Unesco's Subprogramme III.3.3 entirely devoted to the 'training and further training of all communication personnel', approved by the recent Extraordinary Session of the General Conference as part of the second Medium-Term Plan (1984-1989) he emphasized that Unesco's programme for 1984-1985 gives special importance to the training of trainers in the field of communication and to the exchange of experience and personnel. In particular, it was stipulated that the results of this meeting would be taken into account in the formulation of Unesco's activities. Citing the diversity of cultures represented, he none the less felt that certain problems concerning funding, equipment and exchanges could find solutions in common strategies. These methods and strategies could then be adapted to different situations and realities. He cited Unesco's role as a catalyst in both the rationalization of resources and co-ordination. Stressing the need for an interdisciplinary and interregional approach, he emphasized the priority given to professional communication training in the International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC) and its importance in the establishment of a New World Information and Communication Order.

The discussion in the plenary sessions were devoted to reports by participants on the problems and needs of training in their respective regions with a particular view to the trainer and methods, curricula and training materials, new techniques and the need for greater regional and interregional co-operation.

The trainer and methods

One of the major preoccupations of the meeting was the need for qualified and even sophisticated communication trainers. Problems with finding the perfect teacher were discussed by most of the participants. Although the ideal person would be someone with academic qualifications and five years' practical media experience, this person was rarely found. Some excellent teachers were not acceptable to universities because they lacked degrees. Critics of outmoded teaching methods complained that too many teachers had never been trained in pedagogical skills. Alternatives for such a situation were part-time instructors, post-graduate students, journalists on sabbatical leave and guest staffs borrowed from the media. Several participants stated that it was difficult to persuade journalists to become teachers because the teaching profession lacked prestige and advancement opportunities.

Inadequate teaching methods were cited by many participants who also stressed the need for continuous evaluation of methods as well as curricula. Participants discussed the ideal proportion of theoretical and practical instruction. Certain methods such as distance teaching, teleconferencing and small community video techniques were particularly recommended for isolated regions. Language difficulties in teaching were also mentioned by several participants from regions having a multiplicity of local languages. The participants also discussed on-the-job-in-house training, field training and the lack of sufficient scholarships.

Curricula and training materials

Several participants and, in particular, Latin American specialists stressed the need to adapt curricula in the field of communication to continuing social change. The need was seen to instruct students in their role as critics of society and raise their awareness to the needs of their local regional and national communities. They stressed the need for practical training at the medium technical level. Specialized courses for the training of trainers were considered essential. Some participants from Africa indicated the need for specialized training courses on the use and design of hardware as well as in the planning and management of communication systems. On the other hand, since content was crucial, there was a need for training in the production of messages which is often neglected. The need for the establishment of common ground or a minimum curricula that could serve as a basis for an international recognition of equivalencies in qualifications for communication training was also expressed. Special needs were stressed for the training of women in all fields of communication, especially in the non-traditional areas such as management, electronic news gathering, technical and engineering skills. Courses were also suggested for editors, senior executives and non-journalist development personnel. The need for curricula in development journalism and the development of applied research methods was also stressed. Speakers emphasized the need for creating new models for major research rather than importing irrelevant structures.

In speaking of training materials, most participants from developing countries drew attention to the need for relevant training materials suited to their own regional context. Participants from Africa, in particular, stressed the need to produce manuals by Africans themselves but since individual countries did not have adequate funds to develop them alone, regional workshops leading to the production of such manuals were suggested.

Emphasis was placed by speakers from many regions for more textbooks and teaching materials produced for regional use and for assistance in preparing audio-visual aids. Several participants indicated the need for the exchange of training materials, especially audio-visual aids and documentation at the regional level. Some participants spoke of the lack of physical training facilities and the inadequacy of equipment.

New techniques

Several participants mentioned the need to introduce computers in the training of communicators. Others referred to the continuous computerization of information and indicated that regional training centres should be concerned with this development. Some participants from Africa stated that they had little information or exposure to new techniques. They felt that the relevancy of such new technology should be examined at the regional level before adapting it to local needs and that the old techniques should be perfected.

Regional and interregional co-operation

Possibilities for regional and interregional co-operation among communication training institutions were widely discussed by almost all participants. This co-operation included the exchange of experiences and teaching personnel as well as training materials. Sharing of new developments in the field of communication and training methods was also mentioned. The problem of availability of teaching manuals and their exchange on a regional and interregional basis was raised by several participants. Some speakers suggested that Unesco could help in the exchange of experience, training, reference materials, trainers and guest lecturers within the framework of its own programme. Unesco's assistance was also sought for organizing seminars at a regional level to establish the basis for future co-operative programmes. Some participants from developing countries underlined certain problems for the development of regional co-operation in the field of communication training: regional political divisions, strict foreign exchange regulations and media ownership. One participant pleaded for the establishment of new patterns of co-operation to be developed on a long-term contractual basis. Being from a developed country, he invited other industrialized countries to be concerned about their own problems and suggested the identification of training materials that could be used for interregional exchanges. He also stressed the challenge posed by the needs for translation during the next decade.

Another participant suggested that Unesco organize regional meetings on a regular basis of professional journalists' associations to encourage co-operation in all spheres of communication training. He also stressed the need to examine training requirements in relation to the labour market. In Latin America, for example, there seems to be an over-production of professionals compared to the weak capacity of communication systems to integrate these professionals. The difficulty of balancing supply and demand for media students concerned several participants and one of them stressed the need for the planning of human resources in this field.

The role of outside agencies and foundations in encouraging and stimulated training institutes was commented upon favourably by several participants. Speakers from training institutes in Europe described the problems of providing practical training for foreign students, including language and environment adjustments and offered partnerships and the loan of staff to third-world institutes. Developments in this field included long-term training contracts, scholarships to attend regional meetings and collaboration in providing textbooks. Regional co-operation was urged for the raising of standards, the setting up of an accreditation system, and joint

workshops for training trainers. Several speakers decribed their initiatives in producing inventories of media training needs and resources and participants requested that more information be distributed about conferences and meetings, including the present one.

Several observers from non-governmental organizations and professional associations offered suggestions. One observer spoke of the need for an improvement in the general education of media personnel. The role of the media was stressed in the teaching of specialists in the health and development field. Appeals were made for the creation of more self-training and programmed learning materials and the needs of older personnel who felt threatened by better educated recruits and more sophisticated equipment. Several organizations decribed exchange systems for teaching materials and curriculum development models. One speaker felt that television training, in particular, should be more on a group or collective basis rather than on an individual one considering the team nature required for all production. Many observers expressed their willingness to collaborate and to share experience to create new structures and patterns for improved media training.

The plenary separated into the following working groups who elected their own officers:

Working Group I	:	Broadcasting and Film Training
Chairman	:	Mr Khudr Shaar (Syria)
Rapporteur	:	Dr Aggrey Brown (Jamaica)
Working Group II	:	Print Media Training
Chairman	:	Ms Elizabeth Okwenje (Kenya)
Rapporteur	:	Mr Adlai Amor (Philippines)

The working groups formulated recommendations concerning co-operation with international and regional communication training organizations; staff development; curricula, textbooks and training materials; specialist needs, women in the media, research and evaluation; clearing-houses and miscellaneous needs.

The rapporteurs subsequently consolidated the recommendations emanating from the two groups and the following recommendations were adopted by the meeting at its final plenary session.

RECOMMENDATIONS

I. CO-OPERATION WITH INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL COMMUNICATION TRAINING ORGANIZATIONS

1. Unesco, in collaboration with ITU, should continue and reinforce its catalytic and co-ordinating efforts to encourage initiatives at international and regional levels in the realms of communication training, particularly with a view to: (1) encouraging and supporting regional training programmes and workshops; (2) gathering experts in curricula design and the production of training texts and materials towards concerted efforts in the production of written and audio-visual training materials; collecting and assessing information on regional training needs, problems, and possible approaches; and (3) planning, encouraging and supporting regular regional and global consultations on communication training problems.

2. Unesco, IPDC, UNDP, governments, multilateral and bilateral aid sources, and other development agencies should allocate appropriate technical and financial assistance towards strengthening existing regional communication training institutions and associations, and, where needed, provide preparatory assistance in the planning, organizational design, and eventual launching of new regional communication institutions. Particular attention should be focused on the following proposals:

(a) A consultative committee on communication education in Latin America, composed of members selected from existing regional and national training institutions to diagnose needs and problems particular to this region and propose remedial actions.

(b) A permanent base and headquarters for the African Council on Communication Education.

(c) Establishment of the proposed African Institute for Communication Development and Research.

(d) An Asia Pacific Press Centre among whose principal aims are the establishment, where necessary, of new national press institutes in Asia, strengthening and support of programmes undertaken by the existing press institutes, encouragement and co-ordination of regional, subregional and national training programmes with particular emphasis on the Pacific.

(e) The planning and eventual establishment of a system of communication training in the Pacific region and for the Portuguese-speaking countries of Africa.

3. Regional and national training organizations should take positive steps towards inducing media organizations and related other institutions benefiting from such training programmes to contribute their share to the costs of training.

4. Unesco, in consultation with international and regional communication training organizations. should consider the need and feasibility of establishing an international association for communication education. In principle, the core of this association should be the regional communication training institutions and associations; other types of membership should include national training institutions and organizations, related organizations and individual members.

5. Regular meetings of heads of regional communication training institutions should be established to foster and promote the recommendations and initiatives of this meeting of experts. Non-governmental organizations and especially qualified individuals should also be invited to participate and to support follow-up actions. Financial and counterpart contributions essential to the convening of these annual meetings should be sought from appropriate multilateral, bilateral and other sources and the meetings rotated throughout regions of the world.

II. STAFF DEVELOPMENT

1. Academic and other institutions concerned with communication education should exercise flexibility in the appointment of experienced media practitioners to teaching posts even if they do not have formal academic qualifications, but who none the less have the requisite teaching skills.

2. Unesco and other international agencies should support initiatives to enable teachers to participate in professional media activities and for professional media workers to participate in teaching and other academic activities.

3. Media organizations, governments and other agencies should give due credit and recognition to media and communication teachers. This can be done by offering them attractive career prospects so as to enable communication training institutions to attract and retain suitable professionals.

4. Unesco, international agencies, experienced communication training institutions and non-governmental organizations should initiate a programme of workshops and seminars in which master teachers and trainers teach and train others in the methods and procedures of successful training and teaching. Ideally, such programmes should be conducted at the regional level.

5. Unesco should provide resources for experienced communication educators and specialists to work in other communication training institutions within and outside their regions for the enhancement of their training expertise.

6. Unesco, media organizations, governments and other agencies should encourage the increase of training activities in situ in order to cover the needs of members of the teaching staff simultaneously and to include the use of methodologies designed to improve the institution's capacities as a whole and not as the sum total of individual training.

III. CURRICULA, TEXTBOOKS AND TRAINING MATERIALS

1. Unesco and other international agencies should convene workshops to plan and develop communication education curricula relevant to regional and national needs.

2. Unesco and other international agencies should produce and publish communication and journalism textbooks relevant to regional and national needs and give assistance to others in this work. Where such textbooks and manuals are already in existence, efforts should be made to disseminate them to other regions with a view to adapting these publications to suit local needs.

In the formulation of curricula and textbooks, special attention should be given to the needs for long-distance communication education and self-study and support for trainers outside institutions.

3. Unesco and other international agencies should support the origination and supply of suitable audio-visual materials for use in communication teaching. While some of this material may be suitable outside the area of its origin, special concern must be shown for the needs of different regions.

4. Attention should be given to offers from the Centre of Services of Audio-Visual Pedagogy in Hungary to provide small gauge video training programmes and facilities to organize workshops on audio-visual teaching.

IV. SPECIALIST NEEDS

1. Press associations, universities, communication institutes and media organizations should further develop their specialist and advanced training programmes. In addition to general pre-entry training and education, the profession needs

mid-career courses, workshops and seminars on a systematic basis to cover the wide range of specialist needs. Such needs would include training for news agencies, photo-journalism, video journalism, development journalism, economic reporting, rural communication, book publishing, the preparation of correspondents for foreign reporting, documentation and library skills; the development of indigenous technical manpower for maintenance of technical facilities and equipment for all media and other special needs which may arise. Training should also be provided for news executives and others in senior positions in media management to fit them for higher responsibilities.

2. Unesco, other United Nations agencies and funding agencies should consider providing financial and technical support for the conduct of the specialized courses cited above.

3. Unesco should support regional and international training of managers of media training institutes. This training should include curriculum design; teaching strategies; facilities design and planning; technical operations design and planning; financial planning; staff recruitment training and development; student selection and professional placement of graduates.

4. Unesco and the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) should encourage co-operation between centres training telecommunication specialists and those training information personnel in common areas of concern.

5. Unesco should assist CILECT, representing film and broadcasting schools, to make it possible to implement its offer to co-ordinate the technical resources of the CILECT schools with the needs of regions and regional institutions, which includes the establishment of a data bank, i.e. clearing-house. This assistance should also be given to similar organizations which indicate their readiness to co-operate in this work. Unesco should note the offer by the Australian Film and Television School, which has specialized in the design and organization of communication courses, to exchange experience with other organizations and help arrange training courses.

V. WOMEN IN THE MEDIA

1. Governments, media establishments, training institutions, international and regional organizations should accord increasing attention to the potential and role of women in media production and management and provide positive support to seminars and workshops oriented towards improved use of the media for women's needs and activities emanating from regional women's media associations.

2. Media organizations should encourage and support the operations and dissemination of women's news features services in the various regions.

3. Unesco, training institutions and media establishments should give special emphasis to the training of women in areas such as management, the technical aspects of television, video, radio, film, audio-visual, satellite communication and print media. Particular encouragement should be given to training in electronic field production techniques so that programmes for national development will involve women's concerns as equal partners in society.

4. Attention and assistance should be given to the proposed regional workshop on electronic field production to be held in Nairobi, Kenya in 1985 to coincide with the United Nations World Conference of Women.

VI. RESEARCH AND EVALUATION

1. Training institutions and media associations should strive to promote the need for research and evaluation in all aspects of communication training, including the training of researchers into the effects of mass communication on society and perspectives for the future.

2. Scholarly research on communication education and training should be encouraged by publishing such research in existing journals. In regions where there are no such journals, Unesco and the relevant media institutions should explore the feasibility of starting them.

VII. CLEARING-HOUSES

1. Unesco, in co-operation with international agencies and non-governmental organizations, should assist regional training institutions to compile, publish and disseminate a directory of all communications training related institutions. The regional directories, to be updated every two years, should contain information on course offerings, duration of courses, facilities and other pertinent information.

2. Unesco, other international agencies and non-governmental organizations, should consider the possibilities of compiling a world directory based upon the proposed regional directories, as well as those that are being planned or have been printed by the International Organization of Journalists, the Asian Mass Communication Information Centre, the Commonwealth Secretariat, the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communications and other organizations.

3. Regional, interregional and international media and educational organizations should collect, collate and disseminate relevant information on the movement of personnel in the field of communication training, vacancies and the availability of consultants. This information could be collated into periodic journals or into the existing publications of such organizations, provided that they are given wide circulation.

4. Regional and interregional communication fairs should be convened to exhibit curricula, texts, modules and training aids used in various institutes and to compare and exchange such materials and curricular design, new techniques and technologies.

5. Regional centres should arrange interchange between institutions to co-ordinate curricula and standardize levels at which diplomas and degrees are awarded.

VIII. MISCELLANEOUS

1. Unesco should convey to member governments the crucial role communication plays in the process of national, social, economic and cultural development. To this end, the meeting further recommends that member governments include communication personnel in the design, implementation and evaluation of development projects like health care, agriculture, housing and urban planning. Extensive workers in these fields should be given training in communication skills to further their efficacity.

2. A mechanism should be established to monitor the manufacture and distribution and experience in the use of communication technologies so that users of these technologies, especially in the training field, should have access to reliable information to guide their acquisition of equipment and systems.

3. Communication training institutions should examine their potential for research on and development of appropriate technologies, both for their own needs and for the contribution which they may make to the media within their countries and regions. Unesco, ITU and other multilateral and bilateral agencies should support initiatives by training institutions to design and construct prototypes and to facilitate the exchange of experience and personnel leading to the development and manufacture of communication equipment within developing regions.

4. Unesco should support the development of participatory communication by (1) promoting its practical implementation; (2) encouraging research in its methods and results; and (3) facilitating the exchange of experiences and research-results in order to enhance training in this field.

5. Curricula of communication training institutions should include ethical problems and Unesco and United Nations documents on mass media should be made available for teaching journalism. Appropriate Unesco resolutions should be kept in mind in preparing textbooks, manuals and training aids in developing curricula and in the process of teaching.

ANNEX/ANNEXE

List of Participants/Liste des participants

I. PARTICIPANTS

Dr. José Manuel ALVAREZ MANILLA
Director General
Instituto Latinoamericano de la Comunicación Educativa (ILCE)
J. Luis Vives 200
Apartado Postal 94-328
MEXICO 10 D.F. (Mexico)

Mr. Adlai AMOR
Training Coordinator and Deputy Executive Editor of Depthnews
Press Foundation of Asia
P.O. Box 1843
MANILA (Philippines)

Mr. Paul A. V. ANSAH
Director
School of Journalism and Communication
University of Ghana
P.O. Box 53
Legon
ACCRA (Ghana)

Mr. Ramanujam BALAKRISHNAN
Director
Asia-Pacific Institute for Broadcasting Development (AIBD)
P.O. Box 1137
Pantai
KUALA LUMPUR (Malaysia)

M. David BARRY
Directeur
Centre interafricain d'études en radio-rurale de Ouagadougou (CIERRO)
B.P. 385
OUAGADOUGOU (Haute-Volta)

(Mr. Barry is also representing the Union of National Radio and Television Organizations of Africa/Union des radio-diffusions et télévisions nationales d'Afrique (URTNA))

Mr. Del BRINKMAN
Dean
University of Kansas
William Allen White School of Journalism
200 Flint Hall
Lawrence
KANSAS 66045 (U.S.A.)

Dr. Aggrey BROWN
Director
Caribbean Institute of Mass Communication (CARIMAC)
University of the West Indies
P.O. Box 175
Mona
KINGSTON 7 (Jamaica)

M. Moncef CHENOUFI
Directeur
Institut de presse et des sciences de l'information (IPSI)
7 Impasse Mohamed Bachrouch
Montfleury
TUNIS (Tunisie)

M. Jacques FAME NDONGO
Directeur
Ecole Supérieure des Sciences et Techniques de l'Information (ESSTI)
B.P. 1328
YAOUNDE (Cameroun)

Mr. Mohamed KHALIL
Assistant Director
Gulf Training Centre for
Radio and Television
Ministry of Information
P.O. Box 8223
DOHA (Qatar)

M. Pascal LECLERCQ
Responsable de la Coopération
Internationale
Direction de la Formation
Professionnelle
Institut National de l'Audiovisuel
(INA)
4 avenue de l'Europe
94360 BRY-SUR-MARNE (France)

Dr. Jack LYLE
Director
East-West Center
East-West Communication Institute
1777 East-West Road
HONOLULU
Hawaii 96848 (U.S.A.)

Professor Yuri MATYUKHIN
Deputy Dean
Faculty of International Journalism
Moscow Institute of International
Relations
USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs
53 Metrostroevskaj St.
MOSCOW (U.S.S.R.)

Mr. N.V.K. MURTHY
Director
Film and Television Institute
of India (FTII)
Law College Road
PUNE 411 004 (India)

Dr. Ferenc NEMETH
Director
IOJ - International Institute
for the Training of Journalists
(IITJ)
Kapy u 49/B
1025 BUDAPEST II (Hungary)

Mr. Levinson D. NGURU
Principal
Kenya Institute of Mass
Communication
P.O. Box 42422
NAIROBI (Kenya)

Ms. Elizabeth OKWENJE
ACCE President and
Director - Communications Unit
Communications Training Centre
All Africa Conference of
Churches
Waiyaki Way
P.O. Box 14206
NAIROBI (Kenya)

Dr. Luis PROANO
Director General
Centro Internacional de Estudios
Superiores de Comunicación
para America Latina (CIESPAL)
Almagro y Andrade Marín
Apartado 584
QUITO (Ecuador)

Ms. Claire RICHET
Directeur
Centre de Formation et de
Perfectionnement des
Journalistes (CFPJ)
33 rue du Louvre
75002 PARIS (France)

Professor Mario RODRIGUEZ-ARAGON
Facultad de Ciencias de la
Información
Universidad del País Vasco
Apartado 644
Bilbao
LEJONA
Vizcaya (Espagne)

Mr. Donald G.H. ROWLANDS
Director
The Thomson Foundation
4 Bloomsbury Square
LONDON WC1A 2RL (U.K.)

Professor Joaquin SANCHEZ
Président
Federación Latinoamericana de
Asociaciones de Facultades de
Comunicación Social
(FELAFACS)
Apartado Aéreo 7883
BOGOTA 1 (Colombia)

Dr. Antonio SANCHEZ-BRAVO CENJOR
Vice-Doyen
Facultad de Ciencias de la Información
Universidad Complutense de Madrid
Avenida Complutense
Ciudad Universitaria
MADRID (Espagne)

Dr. Wolfgang SCHLEICHER
Chef du Département des Relations Internationales et de la Formation
Deutsche Welle
P.O. Box 100444
5000 KOLN
(Federal Republic of Germany)

Mr. Khudr SHAAR
Director-General
Arab States Broadcasting Union
Training Centre (ASBU)
P.O. Box 5333
DAMASCUS (Syria)

M. Babacar SINE
Directeur
Centre d'études des sciences et techniques de l'information (CESTI)
Université de Dakar-Fann
DAKAR (Sénégal)

Dr. Aleksandar SPASIC
Directeur
Institut Yougoslave de Journalisme
Njegoseva 72
P.O. Box 541
11000 BELGRADE (Yougoslavie)

Mr. Jaap SWART
General Manager
Radio Nederland Training Centre
P.O. Box 222
1200 HILVERSUM
(The Netherlands)

Dr. Hans TREFFKORN
Director
International Institute of Journalism "Werner Lamberz"
Postfach 20 u 36
1162 BERLIN
(German Democratic Republic)

Mr. Storry WALTON
Director
Australian Film and Television School
13-15 Lyonpark Road
North Ryde
SYDNEY
NSW 2073 (Australia)

Ms. Haruko K. WATANABE
Consultant
Training Programme for Women and Development
C/o Asia-Pacific Institute for Broadcasting Development (AIBD)
P.O. Box 1137
Pantai
KUALA LUMPUR (Malaysia)

Tokyo address:

HKW Video Workshop
27-10 3-Chome Matsunoki
Suginami-ku
TOKYO 166 (Japan)

Professor Yassen N. ZASSOURSKY
Dean
Faculty of Journalism
Moscow University
Prospect Marxa 20
MOSCOW K-9 (U.S.S.R.)

II. OBSERVERS/OBSERVATEURS

Acción de Sistemas Informativos Nacionales (ASIN)

Mr. Alejandro ALFONZO
Chairman
Ministerio de Información y Turismo
Apartado de Correos No. 68644
ALTAMIRA-CARACAS (Venezuela)

Catholic International Association for Radio and Television/Association Catholique Internationale pour la Radio et la Télévision (UNDA)

M. Jacques DESSAUCY
Assistant Secrétaire Général
12 rue de l'Orme
1040 BRUXELLES (Belgique)

Ms. Monique GROS
Consultant
41 rue Ribera
75016 PARIS (France)

Centre international de liaison des écoles de cinéma et de télévision (CILECT)

Professor Henry BREITROSE
Member of CILECT Advisory Committee for Training in Developing Countries
Chairman
Department of Communication
Stanford University
Stanford
CALIFORNIA 94305-2070 (U.S.A.)

Mr. Henning CAMRE
Chairman of the Steering Committee for the CILECT TDC Programme
Director
National Film School of Denmark
St. Søndervoldstraede
1419 COPENHAGEN (Denmark)

Professor Peter ULBRICH
Member of CILECT Steering Committee for Training in Developing Countries
Verband der Film- und Fernsehschaffenden der DDR
H. Matern Str. 54
1040 BERLIN
(German Democratic Republic)

Mr. Colin YOUNG
President of CILECT
Member of the Steering Committee for Training in Developing Countries
Director
The National Film and Television School
Beaconsfield Studios
Station Road
Beaconsfield
BUCKS HP9 1LG (U.K.)

Commonwealth Secretariat

Mr. Charles A. GUNAWARDENA
Director
Information Division
Commonwealth Secretariat
Marlborough House
Pall Mall
LONDON SW1Y 5HX (U.K.)

European Broadcasting Union (EBU)/Union Européenne de Radiodiffusion (UER)

M. Denis FRAMBOURT
Direction de l'Action Internationale et de la Formation Professionnelle
Institut National de l'Audio-visuel
(INA)
4 avenue de l'Europe
94360 BRY-SUR-MARNE (France)

Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES)

Mr. Harold VON GOTTBERG
Deputy Secretary-General
Asian Mass Communication Research and Information Centre
(AMIC)
Godesberger Allee 149
5300 BONN
(Federal Republic of Germany)

Friedrich-Naumann-Stiftung (FNS)

Mr. Wolfgang RAMROTH
Head
Africa and Asia Department
Postfach 120 537
5300 BONN 12
(Federal Republic of Germany)

Inter-Press Service (IPS) -
Third World News Agency

Mr. Roberto SAVIO
Director-General
Via Panisperna
207 ROME (Italy)

Mr. Patricio TUPPER
Director
Paris Office
4 rue Charlemagne
75004 PARIS (France)

International Federation of Newspaper Publishers/Fédération internationale des éditeurs de journaux et publications (FIEJP)

M. Michel FROMONT
Directeur
La Nouvelle Gazette
Quai de Flandre No. 2
6000 CHARLEROI (Belgique)

International Organization of Journalists (IOJ)/Organisation internationale des journalistes (OIJ)

M. Gérard GATINOT
Vice-Président
Syndicat national des journalistes CGT
50 rue Edouard Pailleron
75019 PARIS (France)

International Press Institute (IPI)/Institut international de la presse

Mr. Don WOOLFORD
Consultant
London Secretariat
City University
280 St. John Street
LONDON EC1V 0HB (U.K.)

International Radio and Television Organization/Organisation internationale de radiodiffusion et télévision (OIRT)

Ms. Annamaria BERECZ
Head of International Department
of Hungarian Television

Ms. Nora KISS
Head of Section (International
Organizations)

Hungarian Television
Magyar Televizio
Szabadsag Ter 17
1810 BUDAPEST V (Hungary)

VISNEWS Limited

Mr. Herbert K. LEWENHAK
Head of Training
Cumberland Avenue
LONDON NW10 7EH (U.K.)

World Association for Christian Communication (WACC)

Mr. Lynn FAILING
Curriculum Development

Mr. Ramon ORELLANA
Communication Education

122 King's Road
LONDON SW3 4TR (U.K.)

III. ORGANIZATIONS OF THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM/ ORGANISATIONS DU SYSTEME DES NATIONS UNIES

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations/Organisation des Nations Unies pour l'Alimentation et l'Agriculture (FAO)

Mr. Manuel CALVELO RIOS
Project Manager
FAO/UNDP Communication Project Peru
Via delle Terme di Caracalla
00100 ROME (Italy)

Peru address:

Apartado 4480
LIMA (Peru)

International Telecommunication Union (ITU)/Union internationale des télécommunications (UIT)

Mr. Philippe CAPITAINE
Training Expert
Training Division
Technical Co-operation Department
Place des Nations
1211 GENEVA 20 (Switzerland)

World Health Organization (WHO)/ Organisation mondiale de la santé (OMS)

Dr. Marcus DOWLING
Technical Adviser
Division of Health Manpower Development
20 avenue Appia
1211 GENEVA 27 (Switzerland)

IV. UNESCO SECRETARIAT/SECRETARIAT DE L'UNESCO

Representatives of the Director-General/
Représentants du Directeur général

Mr. Gérard BOLLA
Assistant Director-General responsible for the Communication Sector/
Sous-Directeur général chargé du Secteur de la Communication

Mr. Antonio PASQUALI
Deputy Assistant Director-General, Communication Sector/
Sous-Directeur général adjoint, Secteur de la Communication

Mr. Pierre NAVAUX
Director, Division of Development of Communication Systems/
Directeur, Division du développement des systèmes de communication

Secretary/Secrétaire

Ms. Maxine SHATTON
Division of Development of Communication Systems

Assisted by/Assistée de

Ms. Patricia GACHOT
Division of Development of Communication Systems

Mr. Alonso AZNAR
Division for Book Promotion and International Exchanges/
Division de la promotion du livre et des échanges internationaux

Working Group I : Broadcasting and Film Training/
Groupe de travail I : Formation en radiodiffusion et en cinématographie

Mr. Frank GOODSHIP
Division of Development of Communication Systems

Mr. Johnny MCCLAIN
Division of Development of Communication Systems

Working Group II : Print Media Training/
Groupe de travail II : Formation pour la presse écrite

Mr. Carlos A. ARNALDO
Division of Development of Communication Systems

Mr. Vladimir NAIDENOV
Division for Book Promotion and International Exchanges

Mr. Roland SCHREYER
Division of Development of Communication Systems

Regional Communication Advisers/
Conseillers régionaux pour la communication

AFRICA/AFRIQUE

Mr. Alex QUARMYNE

ARAB STATES/PAYS ARABES

Mr. Tayeb SALIH

ASIA/ASIE

Mr. S. M. ALI

LATIN AMERICA/AMERIQUE LATINE

Ms. Nelly DE CAMARGO

Administrative assistance/Soutien administratif général

Ms. Mireille COURTAT
Ms. Miren FARGE
Ms. Pamela J. TOMS
Ms. Katicza TUSCHERER
Ms. Gretta ZELLICH